بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

Introduction

For quite a while, very deceiving tactics have been utilised by the non-Madhhabīs (also known as Salafiyyah) over the past few decades to lure people into their sect. The most prominent of these tactics is to have the unsuspecting public thinking that having differences of opinion in matters of *fiqh* is dangerous and something unfounded within the parameters of our *dīn*. The general public are given questions by the non-Madhhabīs to cause doubts in their minds. These questions range from 'how can four schools (*madhhabs*) be correct?' to questions like 'how can four different opinions be right? Isn't our Prophet ﷺ one?' They also propagate that there must be one way in all matters of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). However these people of innovation (*bidʿah*) conceal, or are ignorant of their own scholars who themselves have differed in *fiqh*. The following is a compilation of a range of issues where the Salafī scholars have differed among themselves in just the description of prayer (*ṣalāh*) itself.

Venturing beyond the scope of differences in *ṣalāh* will, by far, be too lengthy and time consuming for this short epistle; hence, it has been limited to the prayer itself. This is because there are a lot of scholarly differences that can be accumulated between them (adding other differences from other chapters besides the description of prayer). However, the intention is to give the intrigued reader the upshot of this essay and an insight regarding the differences that have occurred between the Salafī scholars.

الاختلاف في صفة الصلاة بين علماء السلفية

The Differences in the Description of Prayer between the Salafī Scholars

May I remind the readers that the intent of this short work is to show that Muslims can never be unified under one opinion in all aspects relating to the religion; differences will occur in our jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and that the scholars will always differ down to the grain. Classical scholars have always agreed on a principle that differences amongst the scholars is a mercy from Allāh ﷻ.

To proceed with the differences:

[1] Folding the Hands after Bowing (*Rukūʿ*) - *Qawmah*

a) Sh. al-Albānī's ؒ opinion that placing your hands back after *rukūʿ* is a misguided innovation (*bidʿah ḍalālah*):

ولست أشك في أن وضع اليدين على الصدر في هذا القيام (يعني بعد الرفع من الركوع) بدعة ضلالة، لأنه لم يرد مطلقا في شيء من أحاديث الصلاة وما أكثرها، ولا ذكره أحد من أئمة الحديث فيما أعلم

"I have no doubt that placing the two hands upon the chest in this standing (i.e. standing after rukūʿ) is a misleading bidʿah (innovation in religion), because this was not mentioned at all in any of the ḥadīths on [describing] ṣalāh though they are numerous. This was not mentioned by any of the scholars of ḥadīth as far as I know."[1]

b) While Sh. Ibn Bāz ﷺ was of the opinion that it was from the Sunnah:

ينبغي أن يعلم أن ما تقدم من البحث في قبض الشمال باليمين ووضعهما على الصدر أو غيره قبل الركوع وبعده كل ذلك من قبيل السنن

"It should be known that the above discussion on holding the left hand with the right one and placing them both on the chest, or any other place, either before or after rukūʿ is an act of Sunnah."[2]

[2] Constantly Moving Finger in *Tashahhud*

a) Sh. Ibn ʿUthaymīn ﷺ was of the opinion that the finger should be moved constantly in *tashahhud* with the *duʿāʾ*, utilising the narration containing the narrator Zāʾidah Ibn Qudāmah:

دلت السنة على أنه يشير بها عند الدعاء، لأن لفظ الحديث «يحركها يدعو بها» فكلّما دعوت حرِّكْ

"The sunnah indicates that he should point with it when supplicating (duʿāʾ), because the ḥadīth reads, 'moving it, making du'ã with it'. So every time you make duʿāʾ (in tashahhud), move your finger."[3]

b) Sh. Muqbil Ibn Hādī al-Wādiʿī ﷺ, utilising ʿAbdullāh Ibn Zubayr's ﷺ narration, says:

هذا الحديث يدل على الإشارة بالأصبع، وأما التحريك فقد تفرد به زائدة بن قدامة، وقد خالف أربعة عشر راوياً

"This ḥadīth proves the indication (ishārah) with the finger, as for moving it then Zāʾidah Ibn Qudāmah is alone in his narration. He has opposed fourteen narrators."

He goes on to reject the narration of Zāʾidah Ibn Qudāmah, saying it is isolated (*shādhdh*).[4]

[3] Placing the Knees on the Ground before the Hands during Sujūd

a) Sh. Ibn Bāz ﷺ, while discussing the *aḥādīth* regarding the knees going first before the hands during the prostrations (*sujūd*), says:

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(1) *Ṣifah Ṣalāt al-Nabī*, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, p. 145.
(2) *Fatāwā Ibn Bāz*, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ibn Bāz, vol. 11 p. 142.
(3) *Al-Sharḥ al-Mumtiʿ*, Ṣāliḥ Ibn ʿUthaymīn, vol. 1 p. 594.
(4) *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥiḥ*, Muqbil Ibn Hādī, vol. 2 p. 121.

وهذا هو الأصح والأرجح، وبذلك يتفق الأحاديث ولا يقع بينها خلا ف. النهي عن البروك كبروك البعير يوافق حديث وائل في تقديم الركبتين، ثم اليدين بعد ذلك في السجود

"And this is the most correct and likely opinion, for that is in agreement with the aḥādīth and there is no difference between them. For the prohibition of kneeling like that of the camel is in agreement with the ḥadīth of Wāʾil regarding the knees going first [for sujūd], thereafter the hands after that during the sujūd."[(5)]

b) However, Sh. al-Albānī ﷺ mentions to do the opposite:

الخرور إلىٰ السجود علىٰ اليدين... كان يضع يديه علىٰ الأرض قبل ركبتيه

"Going Down into Sujūd with the Hands: He used to place his hands on the ground before his knees."[(6)]

[4] Joining the Feet/Ankles in Prayer (*Ṣalāh*)

a) Sh. al-Albānī ﷺ was of the opinion that joining the feet in prayer is from the authentic Sunnah:

ولكن ربما يخفىٰ علىٰ الكثيرين منهم أن من إقامة الصف تسويته بالأقدام، وليس فقط بالمناكب، بل لقد سمعنا مراراً من بعض أئمة المساجد –حين يأمرون بالتسوية –التنبيه علىٰ أن السنة فيها إنما هي بالمناكب فقط دون الأقدام

ولما كان ذلك خلاف الثابت في السنة الصحيحة، رأيت أنه لابد من ذكر ما ورد فيه من الحديث؛ تذكيراً لمن أراد أن يعمل بما صح من السنة؛ غير مغتر بالعادات والتقاليد الفاشية في الأمة

"However, it remains unknown to many that straightening the rows requires straightening it with the feet, not just the shoulders. Indeed, we have often heard some of the Imāms of the mosques (masājid) pointing out - when ordering the people to straighten the rows - that the Sunnah is to do so with the shoulders to the exclusion of the feet! Since this is contrary to what is established in the authentic Sunnah, I thought it necessary to mention some aḥādīth that exist on this topic, as a reminder for whoever wishes to act in accordance with the authentic Sunnah, not being deceived by the widespread customs and habits prevalent in the Ummah."[(7)]

b) Contrary to this position, Sh. Ibn ʿUthaymīn ﷺ mentions the feet should not be joined throughout prayer (*ṣalāh*) and said to do so is extreme:

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(5) *Nūr ʿalā ʾl-Darb*, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ibn Bāz, online ref: http://www.binbaz.org.sa/mat/14936.

(6) *Ṣifah Ṣalāt al-Nabī*, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, p. 139.

(7) *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, vol. 1 pp. 70-74.

وليس معنى ذلك أن يلازم هذا الإلصاق ويبقى ملازماً له في جميع الصلاة. ومن الغلو في هذه المسألة ما يفعله بعض الناس من كونه يلصق كعبه بكعب صاحبه ويفتح قدميه فيما بينهما حتى يكون بينه وبين جاره في المناكب فرجة فيخالف السنة في ذلك، والمقصود أن المناكب والأكعب تتساوى

"It does not mean that he should continue this joining and remain so for the whole ṣalāh. From the extremism that has occurred with regard to this issue is what is done by some people in that one of them will join his ankle to the ankle of his companion, and he will spread his feet so far apart until there is a gap between his shoulder and the shoulder of his companion, so he will oppose the Sunnah by doing that. The aim is that the shoulders and ankles should be in line with each other."[8]

[5] Where to Place the Hands in Prayer (*Ṣalāh*)

a) Sh. al-Albānī ﵀ vehemently advocates the view that the hands should be placed on the chest in prayer:

وضعهما على الصدر هو الذي ثبت في السنة، وخلافه إما ضعيف أو لا أصل له

"Placing the hands on the chest is what is established in the Sunnah, and any other opinion besides this is either weak or has no basis."[9]

b) However, according to Sh. Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān ﵀, other opinions are also regarded as Sunnah:

سنن الأفعال... وضعهما على الصدر أو تحت السرة في حال القيام

"Sunnah actions: and (he should) place both his hands upon the chest or below the navel in the standing posture."[10]

[6] To say '*al-Salām ʿalā 'l-Nabī*' or '*al-Salām ʿalayka ayyuhā 'l-Nabī*' in *al-Taḥiyyāt*

a) Sh. Ṣāliḥ al-Munajjid, who supervises the question and answer website, Islamqa, said after quoting the ḥadīth of Ibn Masʿūd ﵁ stating that after the death of Nabī ﷺ they said '*al-Salām ʿalā 'l-Nabī*':

وهذا أثبت ألفاظ التشهد وأحسنها عند العلماء

"This is the soundest version of the wording of the tashahhud according to the scholars."[11]

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(8) *Fatāwā Arkān al-Islām*, Ṣāliḥ Ibn ʿUthaymīn, vol. 1 p. 312.
(9) *Ṣifah Ṣalāt al-Nabī*, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, p. 88.
(10) *Al-Mulakhkhaṣ al-Fiqhī*, Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, vol. 1 p. 134.
(11) Ṣāliḥ al-Munajjid, online ref: http://islamqa.info/ar/11417.

b) However, Sh. Ibn ʿUthaymīn ﵀ says this is from the *ijtihād* of Ibn Masʿūd ﵁, and that ‘*al-Salām ʿalayka ayyuhā ’l-Nabī*’ should be said:

وأمّا ما وَرَدَ في صحيح البخاري عن عبد الله بن مسعود ﵁ أنهم كانوا يقولون بعد وفاة الرسول ﷺ: «السَّلامُ على النَّبيِّ ورحمة الله وبركاته» فهذا مِن اجتهاداتِه ﵁ التي خالَفه فيها مَنْ هو أعلمُ منه؛ عُمرُ بن الخطَّاب ﵁، فإنه خَطَبَ النَّاسَ على مِنبرِ رسول الله ﷺ وقال في التشهُّدِ: «السَّلامُ عليك أيُّها النبيُّ ورحمة الله» كما رواه مالك في «الموطأ» بسَنَدٍ من أصحِّ الأسانيد، وقاله عُمرُ بمحضر الصَّحابة ﵃ وأقرُّوه على ذلك

“As for what is narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī from Ibn Masʿūd ﵁, that they used to say ‘al-Salām ʿalā ’l-Nabī’ after the Prophet’s ﷺ demise, this is from his ijtihād, in which someone more learned than him, ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﵁ differed with him. ʿUmar ﵁ used to give sermons on the minbar of the Prophet ﷺ and he used to say in the tashahhud: ‘al-Salām ʿalayka ayyuhā ’l-Nabī’, as narrated by Imām Mālik in his Muwaṭṭaʾ with a very authentic chain, and ʿUmar ﵁ did this in the presence of many Ṣaḥābah ﵃, and they all agreed with him.”(12)

[7] Reciting *al-Fātiḥah* in the Loud (*Jahrī*) Prayers behind the Imām

a) Sh. Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān ﵀ mentions three opinions, of which he agrees with the third opinion that it is only obligatory to recite *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* behind the Imām in the quiet prayers:

القول الثالث: التفصيل، في الصلاة السرية تجب؛ أما في الجهرية فيستمع لقراءة إمامه، لقوله تعالى: ﴿وَإِذَا قُرِئَ ٱلْقُرْءَانُ فَٱسْتَمِعُواْ لَهُۥ وَأَنصِتُواْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ٢٠٤﴾

وهذا هو الراجح، وهو اختيار شيخ الإسلام ومذهب الإمام مالك، هو الراجح إن شاء الله لأنه تجتمع به الأدلة أن المأموم يجب عليه قراءة الفاتحة في الصلاة السرية الظهر و العصر، ولا يقرأ في الصلاة الجهرية والإمام يقرأ

“The third opinion: specifically, in the quiet (sirrī) prayers it is obligatory [to recite Sūrat al-Fātiḥah]; as for the loud prayers, then he should listen to the recitation of his Imām, as Allāh says: ‘When the Qurʾān is being recited, listen attentively and remain silent so that you may receive mercy’. This is the correct opinion, and it was also the preferred view of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and in accordance with the School of Imām Mālik. It is the correct opinion, InShāʾAllāh, because it combines all the proofs: like it is obligatory upon the follower to recite al-Fātiḥah in the quiet prayers like Ẓuhr and ʿAṣr, and that he should not recite in the loud prayer while the Imām is reciting.”(13)

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(12) *Al-Sharḥ al-Mumtiʿ*, Ṣāliḥ Ibn ʿUthaymīn, vol. 1 p. 150.
(13) Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, transcribed from the following Q&A session available from his website, online ref: http://www.alfawzan.af.org.sa/node/12731.

b) However, the standing committee of Saudi for research and fatwā said it is obligatory to recite *al-Fātiḥah* in both quiet and loud prayers:

الصحيح من أقوال أهل العلم وجوب قراءة الفاتحة في الصلاة على المنفرد والإمام والمأموم في الصلاة الجهرية والسرية

"The correct opinion from amongst the people of knowledge is that it is obligatory to recite al-Fātiḥah in the prayer for both the munfarid [one praying alone], Imām, and follower, in the loud and quiet prayers."[14]

Conclusion

By the grace of Allāh ﷻ, the above should be more than sufficient to prove the point. The many examples are regarding the differences amongst Salafī scholars in matters related to just prayer alone. The above gives overwhelming proof that differences are inevitable; this is despite the many other scholars from their group who have been left out from this discussion, as well as other issues of differences they have between themselves besides prayer, such as ablution (*wuḍūʾ*), bathing (*ghusl*) and even issues relating to *Ḥajj* and *Ṣawm* etc.

Final Note

May I remind the readers who are looking for the truth that sincerity is important: although we want to act upon the most correct view (in accordance with the Qurʾān and the Sunnah), most of the times our sincerity is severely lacking, harbouring pride (*takabbur*) or even looking down upon others, because we *think* they are not acting upon the truth - which will, in essence, damage any good actions we may strive to do.

والله تعالىٰ أعلم

وصلىٰ الله تعالىٰ علىٰ سيدنا محمد وعلىٰ آله وصحبه أجمعين

[14] *Fatāwā al-Lajnah al-Dāʾimah*, vol. 6 p. 384.